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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA  
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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHHMUNA/CDRUSPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 002629

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR EAP/MTS  
USPACOM ALSO FOR J5  
SECDEF/OSD/ISA/AP TOOLAN/REDMAN  
JOINT STAFF J5 (WILKES/ROBINSON/COLEMAN)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/04/2017

TAGS: [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [PINS](#) [RP](#)

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT ADOPTS JOINT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS  
ON BASILAN INCIDENT

REF: A. MANILA 2575

- [B](#). MANILA 2503
- [C](#). MANILA 2474
- [D](#). MANILA 2428
- [E](#). MANILA 2369
- [F](#). MANILA 2358
- [G](#). MANILA 2344

Classified By: Pol/C Thomas Gibbons for  
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#). (C) Summary. In a continuing effort to preserve the Mindanao peace process, senior Philippine national security officials decided August 2 to emphasize the use of police forces rather than military units in tracking down suspects in the recent beheadings of 10 Marines. Tensions on Basilan are described as having diminished somewhat, as government and Moro Islamic Liberation Front forces continue to exercise restraint. Philippine military forces remain "on standby," however, to support police actions against four Abu Sayyaf Group members identified by the Joint Committee as primary suspects in the beheadings. End Summary.

[2](#). (C) According to Government Peace Negotiations Panel Executive Director Ryan Sullivan, the Joint Committee completed its investigation of the Basilan incident on August [1](#). Twenty-two witnesses were interviewed, including Philippine Marines, Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) members, local government officials, and civilians. Based on two eyewitness accounts, the Joint Committee identified Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) members Umair Indama, Suaib Kalibon, Nurhasan Jamiri, and Buhari Jamiri as the perpetrators in four of the ten beheadings. The identities of those responsible for beheading the other six Philippine Marines remain unknown.

[3](#). (C) Sullivan said National Security Advisor and Acting National Defense Secretary Norberto Gonzales, senior military and police officials, and members of the Cabinet agreed August 2 to coordinate "punitive police actions" against the four ASG members through peace process mechanisms. Other Joint Committee recommendations adopted by the government include the reactivation of the Ad Hoc Joint Action Group, wider dissemination of information on existing peace process agreements and mechanisms, review of evidence supporting the Basilan Regional Trial Court's July 26 issuance of 130 arrest warrants, and return of all Philippine Marine firearms recovered by the MILF during the July 10 armed encounter. Sullivan added that the MILF was expected to follow the Joint

Committee's recommendations, and assist in the identification and apprehension of those responsible for the beheadings.

¶4. (C) While the situation on Basilan remains "far from normal," Sullivan noted that tensions have diminished. With the results of the Joint Committee's investigation, commented Sullivan, "we can now better manage the situation."

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KENNEY